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Role of think tanks in context of public policies in Poland: casus of energy policy

THE APPLICATION OF THE CATEGORY “PUBLIC POLICY” IN POLAND is burdened with some inconvenience, because the term came into the public discourse and political practice quite recently and may be defined in several different ways. The construction of the definition is further hampered by the lack of proper and unequivocal counterpart to the English term public policy, which can be used in the Polish language. This problem was articulated by Jerzy Hausner, who pointed out in semantic analysis that word “policy” has at least four meanings: power, political system, political actions and public policies. Moreover, the difference between what has been understood as politics (space of power struggle) and what has been understood as policy (sphere of administration and management of public affairs) is becoming less clear (Hausner, 2005, p. 35).

The beginning of system transformation in Poland deserves, without doubt, to be called the symbol of turning point. It constitutes the new era in the country – foundation of a new regime and the different model of public institutions functioning. The process of accession to the European Union’s structures, interrelated with the need to meet a number of requirements and to adapt the procedure of executing public actions to the European standards, was the further impulse to professionalize Polish policies (Zybała, 2012b, p. 36). Despite the significant improvements in this aspect of public life, there is still a prevalent opinion that the effective model of projecting, implementing and evaluation of public policies has not yet been developed (Krajowe polityki publiczne, 2011, p. 313 – 330; Zybała, 2012a, p. 1 – 4).

This text aims at assessing the role of think tanks in the process of implementation of public policies in Poland, as exemplified by energy policy. Due to complex character of the issue that was taken up, Authors will focus on four key problem areas, which, as they assume,

play crucial role in shaping of Polish energy policy. This task must be preceded by adequate defining, due to the fact that terms like “think tanks” and “public policies” still are not included as integral components of Polish discourse specific for political actors (parties, public administration), third sector (non-governmental organizations) and social sciences (Zybała, 2010a, p. 25).

THINK TANKS: DEFINITIONAL APPROACH

THE SUBJECT OF THINK TANKS WAS THE MOST ACCURATELY THEORIZED in Anglo-Saxon and German research literature (Weaver, McGann, 2000 i in.). In Polish literature, the field works broader on the subject of think tanks and political advisory from the perspective of political sciences emerged only after 2010. An entry point for deliberations is the definition worked out during United Nations Development Program (UNDP). According to it, think tanks are “...research, analysis and engagement institutions that generate policy advice on domestic and international issues, enabling both policymakers and the public at large to make informed decisions” (McGann, 2011, p. 8). Martin Thunert decided to underline other important elements in his definition, stating that the most important task of think tanks is “scientific, interdisciplinary research and comment on politically important subjects” (Thunert, 2008, p. 30 – 31). Josef Braml pointed out that think tanks are part of “third sector”, which means that it creates a common ground for civil society and its political system, mainly through the exchange of ideas and personnel between public and private sectors (after: Kaczmarek, 2011, s. 17).

Kent Weaver in his typology of think tank institutions distinguished the following types: universities *sans* students, contractual research centers and defense centers. Tadeusz Kaczmarek suggested a modification of Weaver’s model, adding one new category – “substantial counseling” which refers to the advocacy of think tanks. This type of expert institution is focused on research of practical problems and obtaining new political arguments (Kaczmarek, 2011, p. 28 – 30).

Monika Sus proposed a division which reflects different methods of work, highlighting three key planes of action: political advising (counseling on formation of functional rules of political institutions or legal rules which refer to them), political consulting (counseling on communication and strategy of political process, campaigns and referendum) and policy advice: counseling based on scientific re-

search, referring to substantial content of particular political spheres (Sus, 2011, p. 32).

It is important to underline the narrow scope of specialization of the advisory institutions. Think tanks are tasked mainly with substantial-based actions, they are analysis and assessment of current political situation and proposition of further actions in this particular area in accordance to guidelines found in selected ideas and political doctrines, presentation of forecasts and simulations of political occurrences. This knowledge is about to help employees of expert centers by influencing the institutions and playing important role in public debates on subjects defined as think tank's area of expertise (Kaczmarek, 2011, p. 17 – 18). Volker Perthes pointed out five key functions of think tanks: informing of a problem and initiation of a public debate, development of new ideas and concepts, securing the space to test new solutions developed by decision-making bodies, warning about potential problems and initiate as well as support the exchange of ideas between politicians, researchers and society (after: Sus, 2011, p. 89).

PUBLIC POLICIES: DEFINITIONAL APPROACH

ACCORDING TO THE CLASSICAL APPROACH OF THOMAS DYE, public policies are “anything a government chooses to do or not do” (Dye, 1972, p. 2). Despite the high level of generality, this depiction of subject became the point of reference to a considerable number of later defining attempts. Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh explain this fact by two basic elements of public policies being contained by Dye's definition. First: subjects which executes public policy are organs of public authority (mostly government, administration and local governments). Second: results of decision-making process create the content of politics, wherein similar weight have decisions of political actors and their lack of action (no decision counts as decision as well) (Howlett, Ramesh, 1995, p. 5). In the perception of William Jenkins public policy is “a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve” (Jenkins, 1978, p. 15). Remark that execution of politics is complex, multidimensional and intentional process, puts itself in the foreground.

Such characteristics brings to light one more feature of public policies – their close connection to social sphere. In dependance to results obtained in process of implementation of politics, society's liv-

ing condition may be changing *in plus* or *in minus*. This aspect was strongly underlined by Brainard Guy Peters. According to his position, “public policy is the sum of government activities, whether pursued directly or through agents, as those activities have an influence on the lives of citizens” (Guy Peters, 2012, p. 4). As mentioned the definition includes a group of participants that design and execute politics for the non-state actors like: non-governmental organisations, groups of interest and informal groups of citizens (Guy Peters, 2012, p. 5). Mark Considine, on the other hand, defines public policies as actions which employ organs of government and which consist in the use of available resources to support preferred system of values (Considine, 1994, p. 6). This statement is burdened with notion that substance of politics reflects the most important values of given society. In opposition, Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong suggest that delimitation of politics’ course is usually determined during a debate over values. Selection of goals and methods of action usually bring axiological dimension of conclusions. Practically speaking, it means that selected set of values is supported by authorities and other values are being left with such form of support (Kraft, Furlong, 2013, p. 4 – 5).

Considine’s definition contains one other important element. It says that accomplishment of accomplishing preferred state of things, as Yet, limitation of assets effects the imposing actors with the duty of executing their tasks in a way that is effective, efficient and commensurate to possessed means. Such situation generates a need for specialist consultancy offered by expert organizations. Thanks to them, actors may act toward optimization of process of executing public actions.

In accordance with this work’s interpretation, public policies are understood as an arena of organized and multidimensional actions of political and non-political actors that use objectified and specialist knowledge to achieve chosen goals with selected methods of obtaining them. These goals are connected to such areas as: the development of society’s well-being, resolution of group problems and support of preferred values in conditions of limited resources.

THINK TANKS IN POLISH PUBLIC POLICIES: *CASUS* OF POLISH ENERGY POLICY

POLISH ENERGY POLICY SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING based on clearly defined set of values, energy security in this particular case, in condition of limited supplies and based on conflicting goals of interested parties, such as state, private and state-owned compa-

nies and society as a whole. Polish energy policy is based on the document *Polityka energetyczna Polski do 2030 roku*. Strategic framework of the text is the background of presentation of the most dire challenges, such as: the growing demand for energy, considerable dependance on import of liquid gas and petroleum, deficiency of generative infrastructure, and requirement of meeting the obligations which are effect of admission of European Union's 3 x 20% policy. Due to the situation, the following course of action has been set, taking the form of a number of goals to achieve: the improvement of energetic efficiency, improvement in security of fuel supply, diversification of the energy's production structure, development of competitive fuel and energy markets and limitation of negative environmental influence on the energy industry (*Polityka energetyczna*, 2009, p. 4 – 5). These goals are carried out with help of such instruments as: new and effective legal regulations, use of authority of State Treasury and Office of Energy Regulation to impose a supervision over executed policy, benchmarking of regulated markets, monitoring the situation on fuel markets and active policy of Poland in international forums in concern of mentioned policy frameworks (*Polityka energetyczna*, 2009, s. 5).

Although the chosen course of action allows to fully use the think tanks' capability of playing the role of public administration's partner in executing the tasks highlighted in strategic framework, it seems that possibilities of activity for Polish expert institutions in this area are rather limited. It is due to both legal and institutional causes. These organizations are focused mainly on recognition and verification of main problems which emerge during execution of chosen long-term strategy, proposing of future solutions and displaying indirect influence on political elites to achieve change in the legal sphere. Hence, the activities of think tanks in selected areas are limited to publishing analytic reports and research papers, and in co-organization of conferences during which representatives of think tanks meet with agents of public administration and private enterprises. Conferences like *Shale Gas World Europe 2013* or *Nafta i Gaz 2013*, co-hosted by Kościuszko Institute (Instytut Kościuszki, IK), serve as perfect example of such activity.

Apart from IK, following selected think tanks have been actively researching and exploring the angles of Polish energy policy: Instytut Sobieskiego (IS), IK, demosEUROPA foundation, Heinrich Böll Foundation (Heinrich Böll Stiftung) and, to lesser extent, Polski Instytut

Spraw Międzynarodowych (PISM) and Pulaski Foundation (Fundacja im. Kazimierza Pułaskiego). These institutions present their solutions of Polish energy policy problems mostly in the form of reports, available to the public, as well as statements presented in main Polish media channels. It is important to point out that equal amount of attention in these reports is being paid to national directives of energy policy and to guidelines presented by European Union within frames of action plan Energy Policy for Europe. Four key areas of interest of Polish think tanks in context of energy policy are being presented below. These subjects are, as follows: evaluation of long-term energy strategy of Poland, actions for energy diversification, activities of Polish energy diplomacy and actions aimed at implementation of EU's guidelines concerning change of country's energy profile for low-emission.

First of researched area of activities of think tanks is the evaluation of strategic framework presented in *Polityka energetyczna Polski do 2030 roku*. In the case of Sobieski Institute the document was found to be too vague and lacking any clear leads concerning the definite direction of development (Chojnacki, 2011). Such remarks are not different from the statements of experts affiliated with other research centers, like Andrzej Sikora of the Instytut Studiów Energetycznych (cire.pl, 2013). Expert of IS suggest the application of institutional revolution that consists in increasing the role of the market regulator by expanding his competence range and giving him a possibility of effective co-creation of legal rules (Zajdler, 2013, p. 21 – 22). Experts of demoesEUROPA proposed broadening of the strategic planning formula. This proposition can be found in the joint report of demoesEUROPA and Instytut Badań Strukturalnych (Institute of Structural Research, IBS), *Mix energetyczny Polski do 2050 r.* This publication contains recommendations which are consistent with propositions of the government, with added postulate of advancing the process of modernization of the country's transmission traction (Bukowski, Śniegocki, 2011, p. 31). Research papers commissioned by Heinrich Böll Foundation suggest a dissimilar scenario: development of system of micronetworks of renewable energy sources, with reduction of costs of turning to low-emission energy model being the key argument (Instytut Energii Odnawialnej, 2013, p. 32 – 33, Wielgo 2013). This may allow to leave the system, where hard coal remains the country's major energy resource (see: Wróblewska 2010).

Sobieski Institute reacted positively to the long-term plans of the Polish government concerning the diversification of natural re-

sources through the increase in extraction of shale gas. Experts estimated the deal between Polskie Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo (PGNiG) and American Chevron consortium as beneficial, pointing out that it allows the Polish side to obtain know-how on hydraulic fracturing (*fracking*) of wells through which the gas is being extracted. It also supplies the Polish side with financial benefits necessary to accomplish the investment. Experts of Kosciuszko Institute were way more critical when assessing the problem. They pointed out the legal obstacles which diminish the influx and intensification of the action of foreign investors. Izabela Albrycht and Wojciech Bigaj proved that deregulation of law has malefic effect, mostly by discouraging potential business partners from investing in expensive exploratory procedures (Albrycht, Bigaj, 2013, p. 2 – 4). They also pointed out that the criteria of obtaining permission grant are too narrow from the business side's point of view.

Questions about investment in nuclear energy also emerge in the context of diversification. Heinrich Böll Foundation expressed firm objection toward the development of such technology in Poland. On the other hand, according to the analysis presented by demoscEUROPA experts, nuclear energy is ranked as basically non-emission source of energy, which positively impacts the quality of both energy diversification and environment (Hinc, 2012, p. 125).

The subject of energy diplomacy and place of Poland in the European system of energy transmission was accurately researched by experts of Pulaski Foundation and PISM. Both of the expert groups paid special attention to subjects of transit and storage of liquid gas. This system was found by researchers of Pulaski Foundation as unfavorable, mostly due to inflexible character of transit infrastructure and low level of diversification of supplies, which effects in dependance of Polish energy security on the Russian state (Toś, 2010, p. 8 – 9). On the other hand, PISM's analysts find Polish system as safe enough, pointing out only a few weaknesses including the lack of implementation of uniform energy security strategy in the context of gas supply. They suggested that the Polish role in the European energy system is growing, despite the negligence on the side of the political elite. This is an effect of actions toward launching a liquid gas terminal in Świnoujście port harbor (Gawlikowska-Fyk, Kałan, 2013, s. 26 – 29, see: Ćwiek-Karpowicz, 2012, p. 19). Analysts of both foundations pointed out that unification of the European Union's energy market is a chance to improve Poland's energy security, especially in the con-

text of their relations with Russia. They also indicated the importance of cooperation with the Nordic states in the context of energy supply as it is continuously growing (Ćwiek-Karpowicz, 2012, p. 21). Part of independence of Polish energy industry from Russia was also researched by Pulaski Foundation's experts with regards to nuclear energy industry. More precisely: they looked into the cooperation between Poland and the Baltic states for the building and the common use of nuclear power plant Ignalina II in Lithuania. They see pro-Russian stance of the Lithuanian political elites as the biggest obstacle in development of the plan (Nyga-Łukaszewska, Ruszel, 2010, s. 21 – 22).

Two chief energy experts of IS, Tomasz Chmal and Robert Zajdler, are critical toward the adoption of EU's climate policy, pointing out that it threatens the Polish economy, the proposed quotas are somewhat unrealistic, and that Poland lacks in effective infrastructure to properly use renewable energy sources (Chmal, 2013; Zajdler, Hara, Staniłko, 2012; Zajdler, 2012). IS experts do not suggest that the use of renewable sources of energy should be abandoned, but they warn of the high costs of implementation of French or Danish infrastructural and legal solutions. Experts of IK offer similar advice. Their approach is exemplified by their claim that the Polish government's decision of vetoing EU's proposals toward reduction of CO₂ emission by 80% was rational and compatible with Polish national interest (Albrycht 2013). Representatives of demosEUROPA and Heinrich Böll Foundation stand on diametrically different ground. Agata Hinc (demosEUROPA) presented in the report of the government's Bureau of Parliamentary Analysis steps toward meeting EU's norms of energy production, which she found as advantageous for Poland and its development (Hinc, 2012, p. 111). Hinc, while acknowledging aforementioned reservations toward the Union's climate policy, found it to be one of the cornerstones of common policy. Representatives from the Polish branch of the German foundation recommended the adoption of the climate pact as a whole, including the propositions of policy aggravating (increase in charges for air pollution, more effective sanctions against subject emitting gases which increase greenhouse effect, leaving the quota system as lacking in moral value, see: Verolme et al., 2013). Analysts of Pulaski Foundation were more moderate with their propositions: they recommended acting toward low-emission economy, but recognized high cost of such operation, and necessity of cooperation between various sectors of the economic system. Findings of the foundation's experts are similar to these of IS: they claim that

despite the changes, hard coal will remain as the country's dominant energy supply, contrarily to the European Commission's optimistic claims (Kalandyć, Ruszel, 2011, ss. 15, 20).

SUMMARY

THE POLISH ENERGY POLICY IS ONE OF THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS of country's *ratio legis*. As a public policy, it is a common ground for multiple groups of interest and their activities aimed at achieving what they perceive as a success. It may be maintaining the structure of the Polish energy industry, modernizing it in accordance of the EU's directives, reducing the energy prices or achieving independence from supplies brought in from one country, to achieve security through diversification. Think tanks in Poland are active participants in the conflict of interests presented by M. Considine: they act for achieving the change in the Polish energy policy and they aim at influencing the government and other political bodies to obtain legal regulations which reflect the think tank's set of values. Their presence in the game of interest reflects the theoretical approach of Josef Braml, and shows the possibilities and limitations of subjects from the "third sector" in their interaction with administrative bodies. The major handicap of expert institutions is limited by the possibility of imposing political change through the systemic (legal) means. On the other hand, as it is indicated by example of Instytut Sobieskiego and Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party, they are capable of influencing the program through participation in the works of the "shadow cabinet" and persuading the party members to include the postulates of increased regulation and maintenance on hard coal as the primary energy source into political agenda, which increases substantial knowledge and preparation for debate on the MP's side.

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STRESZCZENIE

ANALIZA MA NA CELU PRZEDSTAWIENIE TEORETYCZNEGO I PRAKTYCZNEGO aspektu formowania polityk publicznych oraz roli jaką odgrywają w nich instytucje typu think tank. Podjęto próbę praktycznej implementacji rozważań teoretycznych na przykładzie polskiej polityki energetycznej i roli, jaką think tanki odgrywają w jej formowaniu. Wskazano etapy formowania polityk publicznych, główne obszary aktywności think tanków oraz głównych kluczowych partnerów politycznych uczestniczących w omawianym procesie.

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resowań badawczych: polityka bezpieczeństwa w wymiarze krajowym i międzynarodowym; międzynarodowe systemy polityczne; polityka publiczna, głównie w wymiarze bezpieczeństwa.

Michał Niebylski [michal.niebylski@gmail.com] – doktorant w zakresie nauk o polityce w Instytucie Politologii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, magister politologii. W swojej działalności łączy realizację komercyjnych projektów badawczych na zlecenie administracji publicznej i podmiotów prywatnych z aktywnością naukową skupiającą się na problemie polityk publicznych, obecności think tanków w polskim życiu publicznym i ideologicznej tożsamości polskich partii politycznych.

